



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



STILL LIFE IN WATER COLOR.

BY EMMA HAYWOOD.

THE great advantage of painting from still life lies in the fact that no matter how many sittings you may require to finish or elaborate your work, the model remains practically the same. I say practically the same, because if flowers, fruit or

vegetables are included in your group, they are liable to fade before the finishing touches can be put in, but if replaced by a substitute of exactly the same species, little difficulty will be experienced, provided that a careful study has been made in the first instance. The reason for this is that flowers of the same genus are so precisely similar in form and coloring as to be scarcely distinguishable, especially when gathered off the same tree. This may be said also of fruit and vegetables.

An erroneous impression, however, often prevails among amateurs that a still life group must needs be set out from the very beginning, exactly as it appears in the finished picture. This is very seldom the case in reality, for as the work progresses exigencies arise from the disposition of light and shade necessary for telling effects and the juxtaposition of contrasting colors, which may need readjusting when in course of transition to your picture. Such considerations, apart from others of less moment that might be enumerated, render it well nigh impossible to set out a group and paint it without the slightest alteration.

The true art of composition lies in the artist's own sense of the fitness and harmony of lines. This may justly be termed a

after having settled on some kind of scheme, to take your color box and roughly blot in on a small scale the effect of form, color, light and shade in masses. This will at once give you an idea whether your scheme is a good one. Alterations and improvements will doubtless crowd in on your mind as you go along. Make more than one of these rough sketches, and having finally decided which is the best, proceed to elaborate it slightly, adding



- Emma Haywood
Jenny City

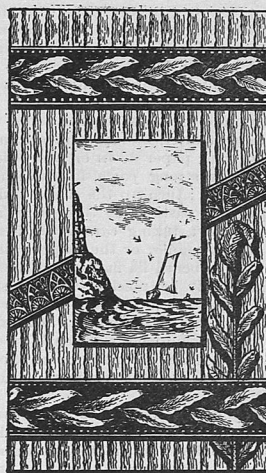


a little more detail. This will serve as a reference if you find yourself wandering too much from your original intention as time goes on.

Having then settled on your subject, the next thing is to place it in the most advantageous light. Much, very much, depends on this. On no account must the light be too diffused; it should be concentrated as much as possible, so as to obtain breadth in the contrasting tones. As a matter of fact a top light is not really the best for the purpose; it should, however, be rather high up. If painting in an ordinary room place your group a little distance from the window, very nearly on a level with your eye. Block the light out altogether from the lower part of the window; if there be more windows in the room it will be well to shade these also. By this means you will obtain a strong concentration of rays that will give you at the same time sparkling lights and rich shadows.

As you are to endeavor to copy faithfully what you see, you cannot expect to gain good effects on paper unless you first ascertain that you have them before you to copy. You must have a north light, otherwise your difficulties will be greatly increased.

It will be found a great help for the convenient arrangement of still life groups to have a corner, made such as I will try to



- Emma Haywood
Jenny City

decorative sense, and can be cultivated by thoughtful study, the same as any other branch of art. Some people possess the germs of it in a marked degree, though they are perhaps unconscious of it themselves, but the decorative sense displays itself in their dress and their surroundings when they are influenced by personal contact. Without the application of this decorative sense no composition, whether of figure subjects or still life, can be successful.

Perhaps the best method to set about arranging a subject is

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

describe. Let two flat thin boards of any convenient size be joined together at right angles in an upright position, and filled in at the bottom with a triangular piece of wood, which forms a floor on which to arrange your group. This structure must be painted with a flat tint of a neutral green grey shade, which may be made to serve the purpose for ordinary backgrounds of a nondescript character. When placed the corner should be turned on its open side rather more than half way towards the light. This arrangement will give some excellent gradations of tone, as it will facilitate the bringing into half shadow objects that are not meant to be too prominent. It will also diversify the depth of shade on the background while concentrating attention on the centre of interest.

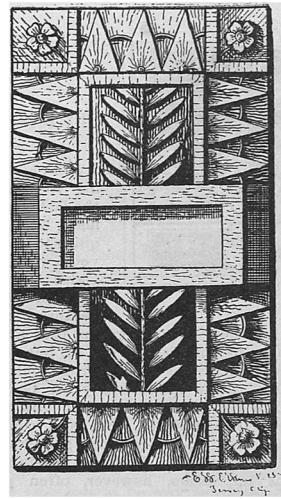
Care must be taken to choose your paper according to your subject. Let the grain be as coarse as is compatible with the



work in hand. It is a great mistake to paint on smooth paper, unless the nature of the study necessitates extra fine and even finish. A good grain to the paper materially assists the texture, and often gives an appearance of finish to very slight work, besides saving time. A charming freshness and transparency can be preserved by following this method, which is too frequently lost through an attempt at over elaboration.

The proper hand made paper for water color painting greatly improves with age if kept in a dry place, otherwise it is liable to mildew. When new it is soft and absorbs the color too rapidly; it is likewise apt to rub up when taking out high lights or making alterations. Age hardens it, and it cannot be too hard. A higher price is generally asked for paper two or three years old; the date is always on it, and can be seen by holding the sheet up to the light. Whatman's paper is the best and most reliable. I have a few odd pieces dated ten and twelve years back, which I regard as a perfect treasure, and should only use for very special work. The paper must be very tightly stretched, either by means of a frame sold for the purpose, or on a board. In either case it must first be thoroughly dampened, the thicker the paper the more it must be moistened. Place it in the frame while wet, and therefore, expanded by the action of the water, it will contract again as it dries, and present a firm, even surface. If you wish to lay your paper down on a drawing board, provide yourself with some strong paste, into which a little size or glue has been introduced; turn up the edges, and after wetting the whole sheet pass the paste along these edges and press them firmly down in every part, taking care not to leave the smallest space for the air to pass under, or the paper will cockle as it dries. Let the frame or board lie flat during the process of drying, and never hasten it by placing it near a stove, especially when the paper is thin. I give this advice for two reasons, first because it is liable to contract too much when exposed to heat, and will expand again when cool sufficiently to render the surface uneven and loose. Then again the excessive contraction may crack the paper, as it will not bear more than a reasonable strain put upon it.

With regard to your outfit in colors and brushes I can only repeat what I have already said in my opening article on "Sketching in Water Colors" in the May number of this magazine, and that is, buy only the best materials; it is simply impossible to obtain good results with inferior colors, and equally impossible to paint well with common brushes. These should be of red sable, as long in the hair as you can get them, as full as



practicable in proportion to their size, and always coming to a fine even point. Invariably before deciding test the point by wetting it and trying it on your thumb nail.

Before attempting anything so ambitious as the grouping of several objects with the view of producing a pleasing picture, the student must advance step by step to this end, if he wishes to insure success. I shall assume the aspirant for still life painting has gone through a proper course of drawing, without which his efforts will be worse than useless, and also that he has some knowledge of the management of color. Let him then begin by making separate studies of not more than one or two objects at a time, always taking as much pains to arrange them and get the best possible effect from them as though it were of vital importance to do so. A couple of apples, a bunch of grapes hung up by means of a stick placed across the top of the triangular corner I have mentioned, or a basket with some eggs in it, an old earthenware jug or some simple vase of some kind, all these and many more such studies that will readily suggest themselves to my readers, will form the very best practice for larger work. When separate objects can be reproduced faithfully and with an air of reality about them, then it is time to indulge yourself by combining some of these in such a manner that they will look more like a picture and less like a mere study.

With regard to the actual method of painting I will endeavor in my next chapter to assist the beginner by some suggestions which may prove useful until he has gained sufficient experience to set his own palette and strike out a line for himself, for never should a true artist allow his work to be fettered by any formula whatever. In such a case painting is at once reduced to a merely mechanical process, instead of giving scope for the development of original genius and artistic aspirations.

